

Re. : Amendment and Response to Office Action Mailed May 12, 2006
Appl. No. : 10/668,747
Filed : September 23, 2003

IV. REMARKS

Claims 1 and 24-44 are currently pending and the Office Action allowed Claims 1 and 35-41. The Office Action also objected to Claims 30 and 42-44, but stated that these claims contained allowable subject matter. The Office Action rejected Claims 24-29, 31-34 and 42-44.

By the foregoing amendments, Applicants amended Claims 24 and 42, and cancelled Claim 30 without prejudice to place the application in condition for immediate allowance or in better form for appeal. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(f), no new matter is introduced by these amendments. After these amendments, Claims 1 and 24-29 and 31-44 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Please note that Applicants' remarks are presented in the order in which the issues were raised in the Office Action for the convenience and reference of the Examiner. In addition, Applicants request that the Examiner carefully review any references discussed below to ensure that Applicants' discussion and understanding of the references, if any, is consistent with the Examiner's. Further, the following remarks are not intended to be an exhaustive enumeration of the distinctions between any particular reference and the claimed invention. Rather, the distinctions identified and discussed below are presented solely by way of example to illustrate some of the differences between the claimed invention and that reference.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Office Action stated that the information disclosure statement filed February 16, 2006 fails to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.98(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37

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C.F.R. § 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. The Office Action stated that references 650,758 and 341,007 (which do not include English abstracts/translations) have been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Applicants do not have an English translation and were not able to obtain an English abstract of references 650,758 and 341,007. Applicants, however, submitted references 650,758 and 341,007 out of abundance of caution to ensure that all available information was disclosed to the Examiner.

The Office Action also stated that the court documents/proceedings that were crossed out in the IDS of April 14, 2005 were not considered “prior art” by the Examiner and, therefore, would not belong listed in an IDS. Applicants submitted these items out of an abundance of caution to ensure that all available information was disclosed to the Examiner.

Terminal Disclaimer

The Office Action stated the terminal disclaimer filed on February 16, 2006 was reviewed, accepted and recorded. Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for her careful review of the terminal disclaimer.

Response to the Objection to Drawings

The Office Action objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) because the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The Office Action stated the plurality of grooves abutting the first end of the first cross pole must be shown or the

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feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). The Office Action also stated that no new matter should be entered and to see Claim 1.

Applicants respectfully traverse this objection to the drawings. Nevertheless, in order to place the application in condition for immediate allowance or better form for appeal, Applicants added new Figure 4B which clearly shows a plurality of grooves abutting the first end of the first cross pole. No new matter is being added because it is supported, for example, by Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants request that this objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Response to the Section 112 Rejection

The Office Action rejected Claim 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the Office Action stated that, for Claim 42, “the sleeve” lacks antecedent basis.

Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for her careful review of the application. As set forth above, Applicants amended Claim 42 to overcome this Section 112 rejection. Accordingly, Applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Response to the First Section 103(a) Rejection

The Office Action rejected Claims 24-26, 28, 29 and 31-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,921,623 issued to Nye, et al., in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,064,815 issued to Baum. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections because the Nye and

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Baum patents, either alone or in combination, fail to teach, suggest or disclose each and every limitation of Claims 24-26, 28, 29 and 31-34.

The Office Action also objected to Claim 30, but stated that Claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In order to place the application in condition for immediate allowance, Applicants amended independent Claim 24 to include the limitations of Claim 30 and cancelled Claim 30.

Therefore, Claims 24-26, 28, 29 and 31-34 should now be allowable. Consequently, Applicants request that this first Section 103(a) rejection be withdrawn.

Response to the Second Section 103(a) Rejection

The Office Action rejected Claims 24, 26, 27, 29 and 31-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by the Baum patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,951,576 issued to Cobos, et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because neither the Baum nor Cobos patents, either alone or in combination, fail to teach, suggest or disclose each and every limitation of Claims 24, 26, 27, 29 and 31-34.

As discussed above, the Office Action objected to Claim 30, but stated that Claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In order to place the application in condition for immediate allowance, Applicants amended independent Claim 24 to include the limitations of Claim 30 and cancelled Claim 30.

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Accordingly, Claims 24, 26, 27, 29 and 31-34 should now be allowable. Thus, Applicants request that this second Section 103(a) rejection be withdrawn.

Allowed Claims

The Office Action allowed Claims 1 and 35-41. As discussed above, the Office Action objected to Claim 30 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but stated that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Office Action also stated that Claim 42 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as set forth in the Office Action. Further, the Office Action stated that Claims 43 and 44 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as set forth in the Office Action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As set forth above, Applicants rewrote independent Claim 24 to include the limitations of Claim 30. Thus, Claims 24-29 and 31-34 are now in condition for immediate allowance. Additionally, Applicants amended Claim 42 to overcome the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, so Claim 42 is now allowable. Further, Claims 43 and 44 are allowable at least because these claims are dependent upon amended Claim 42.

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V. CONCLUSION

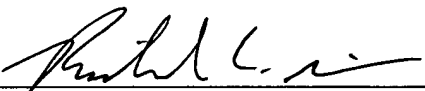
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that Claims 1 and 24-29 and 31-44 are now in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request that a Notice of Allowance be promptly issued.

If any further impediments to allowance of this application remain, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned by telephone so that these remaining issues may be promptly resolved.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of any additional fees associated with this communication, which have not otherwise been paid, to Deposit Account No. 23-3178. If any additional extension of time is required, which have not otherwise been requested, please consider this a petition therefore and charge any additional fees that may be required to Deposit Account No. 23-3178.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 17, 2006

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III. AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached replacement sheet of drawings replaces the sheet of drawings containing Figures 3 and 4. The attached replacement sheet of drawings includes Figures 3, 4A and 4B.



3 / 4

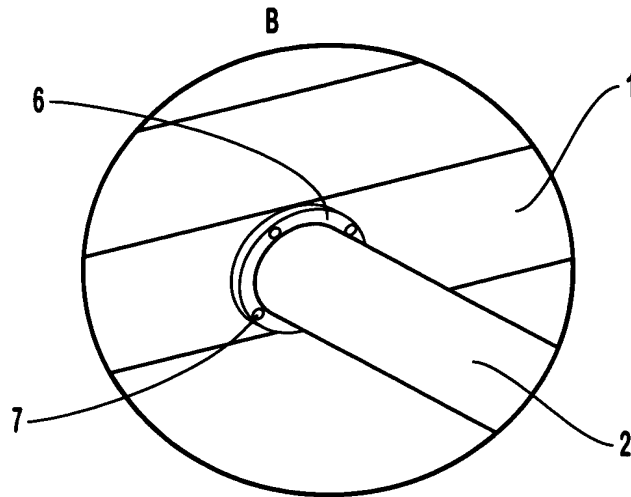


Fig. 3

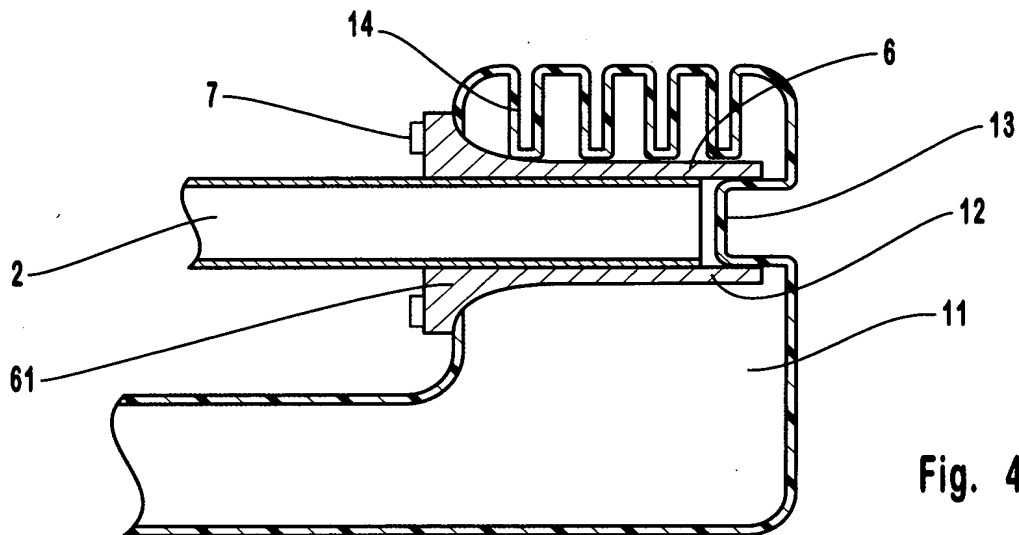


Fig. 4A

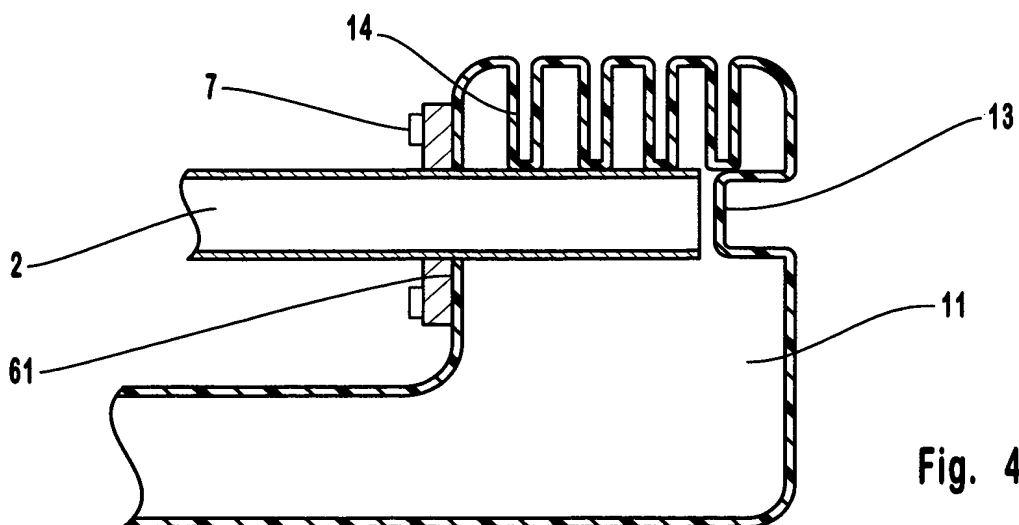


Fig. 4B